

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1-37 (Canceled)

38. (Currently Amended) A method for cooling cheese blocks comprising:
placing a plurality of cheese blocks sequentially into different ~~sections~~ cells of a tank, wherein the ~~sections~~ cells are arranged horizontally with respect to each other and contain cheese blocks that have been in the tank for different amounts of time; and
while cheese blocks are confined within each ~~section~~ cell of the tank, flowing liquid through the tank from a ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks that have been in the tank substantially the greatest amount of time horizontally toward a ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks that have been in the tank substantially the least amount of time.

39. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 wherein placing a plurality of cheese blocks sequentially into different ~~sections~~ cells of a tank comprises sequentially directing cheese blocks from an inlet flume into each ~~section~~ cell, wherein the cheese blocks in each ~~section~~ cell at a given point in time have been in the tank different amounts of time than the cheese blocks in other ~~sections~~ cells.

40. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 39 wherein flowing liquid through the tank comprises:

introducing chilled liquid into a given ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks which have been in the tank for substantially the greatest amount of time;

transferring liquid horizontally from the given ~~section~~ cell into the ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks which have been in the tank for the next greatest amount of time; and

continuing to transfer liquid sequentially into other ~~sections~~ cells of the tank, by successively transferring the liquid horizontally from a cell ~~section~~ by that contains cheese blocks which have been in the tank for a ~~lesser~~ greater amount of time than a ~~section~~ cell which receives the liquid.

41. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 further comprising removing liquid from the tank at the cell ~~section~~ containing cheese blocks that have been in the tank substantially the least amount of time.

42. (Currently Amended) A method for cooling cheese blocks in a tank that is divided by walls into a plurality of cooling cells arranged horizontally, said method comprising:

placing a plurality of cheese blocks into different ones of the plurality of cooling cells, wherein the plurality of cooling cells contain cheese blocks at different temperatures;

introducing a liquid into a selected one of the plurality of cooling cells; and

transferring the liquid horizontally from the selected one of the plurality of cooling cells to another cooling cell and then sequentially from cooling cell to cooling cell, wherein each transfer is horizontally from a cooling cell containing cheese blocks that are colder than cheese blocks in a cooling cell into which the liquid is entering.

43. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 42 wherein introducing a liquid introduces the liquid into the cooling cell that contains cheese blocks having the lowest temperature.

Claim 44 (cancelled).

45. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 42 further comprising chilling the liquid prior to introduction into the tank.

Claims 46-49 (cancelled).

50. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 wherein the different ~~sections~~ cells are formed by dividing the tank with walls ~~into a plurality of cooling cells~~.

51. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 38 further comprising entirely submerging at least some of the cheese blocks in each ~~section~~ cell of the tank.

52. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 42 further comprising entirely submerging at least some of the cheese blocks in each cooling cell of the tank.

53. (Currently Amended) A method for cooling cheese blocks comprising:
placing a plurality of cheese blocks sequentially into different ~~sections~~ cells of a tank, wherein the ~~sections~~ cells are arranged horizontally with respect to each other and contain cheese blocks that have been in the tank for different amounts of time;
entirely submerging at least some of the cheese blocks in each ~~section~~ cell of a tank;
and
while cheese blocks are submerged within each ~~section~~ cell of the tank, flowing liquid horizontally through the tank from a ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks that have been in the tank substantially the greatest amount of time toward a ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks that have been in the tank substantially the least amount of time.

54. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 53 wherein flowing liquid through the tank comprises:
introducing chilled liquid into a given ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks which have been in the tank for substantially the greatest amount of time;
transferring liquid from the given ~~section~~ cell horizontally into the ~~section~~ cell that contains cheese blocks which have been in the tank for the next greatest amount of time;
and

continuing to transfer liquid sequentially into other ~~sections~~ cells of the tank, by successively transferring the liquid horizontally from a ~~section~~ cell by that contains cheese blocks which have been in the tank for a lesser amount of time than a ~~section~~ cell which receives the liquid.

55. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 53 wherein the different ~~sections~~ cells are formed by dividing the tank with walls into a plurality of cooling cells.

56. (New) The method as recited in claim 55 wherein the tank has two opposing first and second sidewalls and each of the walls extends from the first sidewall to the second sidewall.

57. (New) The method as recited in claim 42 wherein the tank has two opposing first and second sidewalls and each of the walls extends from the first sidewall to the second sidewall.

58. (New) The method as recited in claim 50 wherein the tank has two opposing first and second sidewalls and each of the walls extends from the first sidewall to the second sidewall.